

DOCUMENT RESUME

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[The Need to Improve Holiday Administration Overseas]. ID-78-7; B-180403. December 12, 1977. 2 pp. + enclosure (9 pp.).

Report to Secretary, Department of State; by J. K. Fasick, Director, International Div.

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation: Compensation (305).

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Congressional Relevance: House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service.

GAO previously reported to Congress that the degree to which holidays were being observed overseas appeared to be inappropriate. The Department of State advised its diplomatic and consular posts of these findings and asked them to review their holiday observance policies. The posts were told that they should observe only local holidays where failure to do so would be contrary to the interests of the United States, but the posts were not specifically instructed to reduce the number of holidays observed. Findings/Conclusions: U.S. Embassies in the 17 countries originally reviewed recognized an average of 19.8 holidays in 1973 and 19.1 in 1976. According to 1977 holiday schedules, these Embassies will recognize an average of 18.2 holidays. The decrease in 1977 is largely because the Embassy in Laos reduced the number of holidays it recognized to 14, down from 30 in 1973 and 25 in 1976. It would appear that the posts need stronger urging if the number of holidays recognized overseas are to be significantly reduced. In October 1977, the Civil Service Commission asked Federal departments and agencies to comment on proposed guidelines for observing holidays in foreign areas. The guidelines emphasize giving American and foreign national employees only those holidays which are their official holidays unless the employees are placed on annual leave for the day or the annual pay of foreign national employees is reduced to reflect additional non-workdays resulting from observing Federal holidays. The guidelines appear to be sufficiently flexible to cover the varying circumstances within and between foreign countries and specific enough, if properly implemented, to reduce the number of lost workdays. (Author/SW)



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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

DEC 12 1977

B-180403

The Honorable
The Secretary of State

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On March 17, 1975, we reported to the Congress on the need for improving holiday administration overseas and said, among other things, that the degree to which holidays were being observed appeared to be inappropriate. (See "Holiday Administration Overseas: Improvement Needed to Achieve More Equitable Treatment of Employees," (ID-75-42)).

In September 1975, the Department advised its diplomatic and consular posts of our report's principal findings and recommendations. The posts were asked to review their holiday observance policies in the light of our report. The Department also informed the posts that, in accordance with existing provisions of the Foreign Affairs Manual, they should observe only local holidays where failure to do so would be contrary to the interests of the United States. The posts were not specifically instructed to reduce the number of holidays to be observed.

According to our recent followup review, the U.S. Embassies in the 17 countries included in our original review recognized an average of 19.8 holidays in 1973 and 19.1 in 1976. (See encs. I and II.) According to 1977 holiday schedules, these Embassies will recognize an average of 18.2 holidays. The decrease in 1977 is largely because the Embassy in Laos reduced the number of holidays it recognized to 14, down from 30 in 1973 and 25 in 1976. It would appear that the posts need stronger urging if the number of holidays recognized overseas are to be significantly reduced.

In October 1977, the Civil Service Commission asked Federal departments and agencies to comment on a draft Federal Personnel Manual letter and proposed guidelines for observing holidays in foreign areas. These guidelines grew out of the response by the Commission and the Office of Management and Budget to our March 1975 report.

ID-78-7

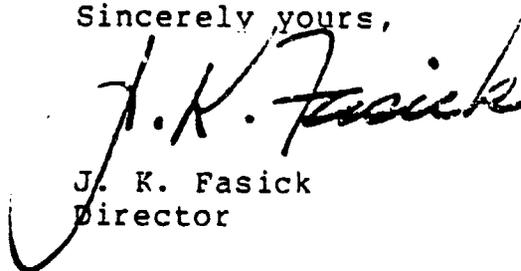
The proposed guidelines emphasize giving American and foreign national employees only those holidays which are their official holidays unless the employees are placed on annual leave for the day or the annual pay of foreign national employees is reduced to reflect additional non-workdays resulting from observing Federal holidays. These guidelines state that only in circumstances where work cannot be properly performed may employees be dismissed without a charge to annual leave (or pay in the case of foreign national employees) on other than their official holidays. Examples of such circumstances are set forth in the guidelines.

We believe that the proposed guidelines are sufficiently flexible to cover the varying circumstances within and between foreign countries and specific enough in intent so that, if properly implemented, they should reduce the number of lost workdays.

We continue to be concerned about holiday administration overseas and trust that the Department will take the steps necessary to ensure the effective implementation by U.S. overseas posts of the guidelines prepared by the Civil Service Commission.

We are sending copies of this letter to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, and selected congressional committees.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. K. Fasick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

J. K. Fasick
Director

Enclosures - 2

COMPARISON OF HOLIDAYS RECOGNIZED
FOR FEDERAL AGENCY EMPLOYEES IN
17 COUNTRIES DURING 1973 AND 1976 (note a)

<u>Country</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Change</u>
Brazil	21-1/2	17	-4-1/2
Ethiopia	22	22	0
Germany	19	19	0
Hong Kong	18	17	-1
India	17	18	1
Indonesia	18	18	0
Italy	19	19	0
Japan	20	20	0
Korea	20	18	-2
Laos	30	25	-5
Peru	17-1/2	15	-2-1/2
Philippines	19	19	0
Saudi Arabia	18	19	1
Spain	24-1/2	23	-1-1/2
Taiwan	20-1/2	23	2-1/2
Thailand	^b 18 (20)	19	1
Zaire	<u>15</u>	^b <u>13</u> (17)	<u>-2</u>
Total holidays	<u>337</u>	<u>324</u>	<u>-13</u>
Average number of holidays	19.8	19.1	-.7

a In a given country, normally fewer holidays are actually observed or taken than are recognized because substitute days are not taken for foreign holidays which fall on weekends or coincide with other holidays. (See enc. II.)

b Figures in parentheses are the number of holidays recognized for foreign national employees when different from that recognized for American employees.

HOLIDAYS RECOGNIZED AND OBSERVED BY
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN NATIONAL EMPLOYEES
OF U.S. AGENCIES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
DURING 1973 AND 1975 (note a)

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Brazil:				
Department of State	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Agency for International Development	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
U.S. Information Service	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
ACTION/Peace Corps	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of the Treasury (note d)	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Justice (note d)	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Commerce	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Transportation	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Library of Congress	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Smithsonian Institution (note d)	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Defense	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Department of Agriculture	19-1/2	21-1/2	17	16
Ethiopia:				
Department of State	18	22	22	17(18)
Agency for International Development	18	22	22	17(18)
U.S. Information Service	18	22	22	17(18)
ACTION/Peace Corps	18	22	22	17(18)
Department of Defense	18	22	22	17(18)
Germany:				
Department of State	18	19	19	16
U.S. Information Service	18	19	19	16
Department of Justice	18	19	19	16
Department of the Treasury	18	19	19	16
Department of Agriculture	13	19	19	16

GAO note: Figures in parentheses are the number of holidays applicable to foreign employees when different from those applicable to American employees.

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Germany: (cont'd)				
Department of Transportation (Berlin and Frankfurt)	18	18	18	15
Department of Commerce:				
Trade Center (Frankfurt)	18	18	18	15
Travel Service (Frankfurt)	11	11	18	15
Department of the Interior (Frankfurt) (note d)	18	18	18	15
Agency for International Development (Frankfurt) (note e)	(not present in 1973)		18	15
General Accounting Office (Frankfurt) (note d)	9	9	9	9
Department of Defense (Bonn)	18	19	19	16
Hong Kong:				
Department of State	18	18	17	17
Department of Justice	18	18	17	17
Department of the Treasury	18	18	17	17
Department of Agriculture	18	18	17	17
U.S. Information Service	18	18	17	17
Export-Import Bank	18	18	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Defense	16	18	17	17
Foreign Broadcast Information Service	(not present in 1973)		17	17
India:				
Department of State	17	17	18	17
U.S. Information Service	17	17	18	17
Agency for International Development	17	17	18	17
Department of Agriculture	17	17	18	17
ACTION/Peace Corps	12(13)	12(13)	(not present in 1976)	
Library of Congress	17	17	18	17
Department of the Treasury	17	17	18	17
Department of Justice (note f)	17	17	18	17
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare	17	17	18	17
Atomic Energy Commission (note d)	18	18	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Defense	17	17	18	17

ENCLOSURE II

ENCLOSURE II

<u>Country and agency</u>	Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)	Total holidays recognized (note c)		Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Indonesia:				
Department of State	15	18	g18	14
Agency for International Development	15	18	g18	14
U.S. Information Service	15	18	g18	14
Department of Agriculture	15	18	g18	14
Library of Congress	15	18	g18	14
Department of Defense	15	18	g18	14
Drug Enforcement Administration	(not present in 1973)		18	14
Italy:				
Department of State	16	19	19	15
U.S. Information Service	16	19	19	15
Department of the Treasury	16	19	19	15
Department of Agriculture	16	19	19	15
Department of Justice	16	19	19	15
Department of Commerce	16	19	19	15
American Battle Monuments Commission:				
Rome	16	19	19	15
Florence	9(17-1/2)	9(17-1/2)	9(17)	9(12)
Department of Defense				
U.S. Army Material Management Agency	9(17-1/2)	9(17-1/2)	(not present in 1976)	
All other	16	19	9(16)	9(12)
NATO Defense College	10	10	17	11
U.S. Air Force, Air Transport Command	16(17-1/2)	19(17-1/2)	(not present in 1976)	
Japan:				
Department of State	16	20	20	18
U.S. Information Service	16	20	20	18
Department of Justice	16	20	20	18
Department of Agriculture	16	20	20	18
Department of the Treasury	16	20	20	18
Department of Commerce	16	20	20	18
Department of Transportation:				
Federal Aviation Administration	16	20	20	18
Coast Guard (note e)	11	11	(not present in 1976)	
Library of Congress (note d)	16	20	20	18

ENCLOSURE II

ENCLOSURE II

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Japan: (cont'd)				
Energy Research & Development Administration (note f)	16	20	20	18
Foreign Broadcast Information Service	16	20	(not present in 1976)	
Agency for International Development	16	20	20	18
National Science Foundation	16	20	20	18
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (note e)	16	20	(not present in 1976)	
Department of the Interior (note d)	16	20	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Defense: Defense Attache	16	20	20	18
Office of Naval Reserve	(not present in 1973)	20	20	18
Korea:				
Department of State	20	20	18	13
U.S. Information Service	20	20	18	13
Agency for International Development	20	20	18	13
Department of Agriculture	20	20	18	13
Department of Defense: Defense Attache	20	20	18	13
Other (U.S. Forces, Korea)	9(10)	9(10)	9(12)	9(12)
Foreign Broadcast Information Service	(not present in 1973)		18	13
Drug Enforcement Administration	(not present in 1973)		18	13
Federal Aviation Administration	(not present in 1973)		18	13
ACTION/Peace Corps	13	13	18	13
Laos:				
Department of State	24	30	25	18
U.S. Information Service	24	30	25	18
Agency for International Development	24	30	(not present in 1976)	
Department of the Treasury	24	30	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Transportation	24	30	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Justice	24	30	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Defense	24	30	13	13

ENCLOSURE II

ENCLOSURE II

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Peru:				
Department of State	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
U.S. Information Service	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
Agency for International Development	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
Department of Agriculture	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
Department of Justice (note d)	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
ACTION/Peace Corps	15-1/2	17-1/2	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Transportation	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
Department of Defense	15-1/2	17-1/2	15	15
Philippines:				
Department of State	18	19	19	17
U.S. Information Service	18	19	19	17
Agency for International Development	18	19	19	17
Veterans Administration	18	19	19	17
Department of Justice	18	19	19	17
Department of the Treasury: Internal Revenue Service (note d)	9	9	19	17
Division of Disbursements	18	19	19	17
Department of Transportation	18	19	19	17
Department of Agriculture	18	19	19	17
ACTION/Peace Corps	18	19	19	17
American Battle Monuments Commission	18	19	19	17
Department of Defense: Defense Attache	18	19	19	17
U.S. Air Force	9(15)	9(15)	9(14)	9(14)
Other	9(14)	9(14)	9(14)	9(14)
Saudi Arabia:				
Department of State	17	18	19	16
U.S. Information Service	17	18	19	16
Agency for International Development (note f)	9	10	(not present in 1976)	
U.S. Geological Survey (note d)	9	10	11	8
Department of Defense: Defense Attache	17	18	19	16
Other	9	9	10	10

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Spain:				
Department of State	22-1/2	24-1/2	23	18
U.S. Information Service	22-1/2	24-1/2	23	18
Department of Agriculture	22-1/2	24-1/2	23	18
Department of Justice	22-1/2	24-1/2	23	18
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (note f)	9	9	23(16)	18(10)
Department of Defense: Officer-in-Charge of Construction	9(15-1/2)	9(17-1/2)	9(16)	10
Other	22-1/2	24-1/2	23	18
Taiwan:				
Department of State	18-1/2	20-1/2	23	19
U.S. Information Service	18-1/2	20-1/2	23	19
Department of Agriculture	18-1/2	20-1/2	23	19
Agency for International Development	18-1/2	20-1/2	23	19
Department of Defense	18-1/2	20-1/2	23	19
Thailand:				
Department of State	17(19)	18(20)	19	16
U.S. Information Service	17(19)	18(20)	19	16
Agency for International Development	17(19)	18(20)	19	16
Department of Justice	17(19)	18(20)	19	16
ACTION/Peace Corps	14	14	19	16
Foreign Broadcast Information Service	9(12)	9(12)	9(13)	9(13)
Department of Agriculture	17(19)	18(20)	19	16
Department of the Treasury (note d)	17	18	(not present in 1976)	
General Accounting Office (note d)	9	9	9	9
Department of Defense:				
Air Force and Navy Officer-in-Charge of Construction (note d)	9(12)	9(12)	19	16
Other	11	11	(not present in 1976)	
	17(12)	18(12)	19	16

<u>Country and agency</u>	<u>Holidays actually observed-1973 (note b)</u>	<u>Total holidays recognized (note c)</u>		<u>Holidays actually observed-1976 (note b)</u>
		<u>1973</u>	<u>1976</u>	
Zaire:				
Department of State	11	15	13(17)	12(16)
U.S. Information Service	11	15	13(17)	12(16)
Agency for International Development	11	15	13(17)	12(16)
ACTION/Peace Corps	6	6	13(17)	12(16)
Department of Agriculture	11	15	13(17)	12(16)
Department of Transportation (note d)	4	4	(not present in 1976)	
Department of Defense	11	15	13(17)	12(16)
Bureau of Reclamation (note d)	(not present in 1973)	13		12

- a In some countries, the number of holidays observed by the Embassy and its constituent posts may vary because a regional holiday is observed. This schedule, unless otherwise noted, reflects holidays recognized and observed by the Embassies; special American and foreign holidays are not included because they occur irregularly.
- b Figures represent the number of days Embassies were actually closed in observance of regular American and host-country holidays and exclude local holidays which fell on weekends or coincided with American holidays. Embassies generally do not observe substitute days for such local holidays.
- c Numbers are total holidays recognized by the Embassies as shown on their respective holiday lists for 1973 and 1976.
- d Agency had no foreign national employees in 1973 and 1976.
- e Agency employed only foreign national employees.
- f Agency had no foreign national employees in 1973.
- g Excludes one foreign holiday which, because of the lunar calendar, was celebrated twice in 1976.

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